

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1947

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 6679

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS BANGKOK, SAIGON, CINCPAC AND USSAGE

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, CB

SUBJECT: TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER IN TAM ON RECRUITMENT AND
OTHER MATTERS

1. SINCE WE HAD RECEIVED ONE OR TWO REPORTS OVER THE
WEEKEND THAT IN TAM WAS AGAIN IN A DEPRESSED MOOD AND
THINKING OF RESIGNING , I CALLED ON HIM AT MY REQUEST
JULY 3 TO SEE HOW HE WAS BEARING UP AND TO DISCUSS THE
PROBLEM OF VOLUNTARY RECRUITMENT.

2. THE PRIME MINISTER DID NOT SEEM PARTICULARLY
DOWNHEARTED, BUT HE COMMENTED AT ONCE THAT HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE MILITARY SITUATION AND WAYS TO
IMPROVE IT BEFORE AUGUST 15 AND THE PROBABLY TERMINATION
OF US COMBAT AIR SUPPORT.

3. SEIZING THE OPENING, I COMMENTED THAT THE MOST
PRESSING CURRENT MILITARY PROBLEM IS THAT OF RECRUITMENT.
I ASKED HIM IF HE HAD BEEN APPROZED OF THE RESULTS OF
THE MEETING HELD BETWEEN HIS MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF
THE EMBASSY ON JUNE 29 (PHNOM PENH 6543, PARA 2 C),
AND HE REPLIED THAT THE PROPOSAL FOR A PAY BONUS FOR
INTERVENTION FORCES IS MOVING AHEAD EXPEDITIOUSLY. I
OBSERVED THAT IT IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT TO DEMONSTRATE
TO THE POPULATION THAT FLAGRANT FANK PROFITEERS ARE BEING
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BROUGHT TO JUSTICE AND TO INSPIRE THE POPULATION WITH
SUFFICIENT CONFIDENCE IN THE REPUBLIC THAT THEY WOULD
WILLINGLY JOIN ITS ARMED FORCES. I POINTED OUT THAT THIS
LATTER IS ESSENTIALLY A POLITICAL FUNCTION AND THAT WE
FELT HE SHOULD TAKE PERSONAL LEADERSHIP OF THE RECRUITMENT

CAMPAIGN (I LEFT HIM WITH A LIST OF ACTIONS HE MIGHT WISH TO CONSIDER IN PLANNING THE CAMPAIGN).

4. IN TAM THANKED ME FOR MY INTEREST AND COMMENTED THAT HE HAD AS YET BEEN UNABLE TO REACH REAL UNDERSTANDING WITH THE FANK CONCERNING RECRUITMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID THAT HE COULD NOT PUT HIMSELF IN THE POSITION OF PLEADING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO JOIN FANK IS AFTER VERY SLIPSHOD TRAINING THEY WERE TO BE SENT TO THE FRONT LINES AS QTE CANNON FODDER UNQTE. I COMMENTED THAT THE OVER-WPYTMING NEED WAS PRECISELY FOR RECRUITS WHO AFTER A PERIOD OF TRAINING WOULD BE SENT AS REPLACEMENTS TO ACTIVE COMBAT UNITS, BUT I ADDED THAT A SAW NO REASON WHY THESE LESS EXPERIENCED SOLDIERS SHOULD NOT BE HELD IN RESERVE AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.

5. IN TAM SAID FURTHER THAT HIS RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE FANK HAVE NOT APPRECIABLY IMPROVED, AND HE CRITICIZED MAJOR GENERAL SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ FOR MAKING SPEECHES IN WHICH HE ASSERTED THAT THE GKR WOULD FIGHT TO FINAL VICTORY WHEN HE HIMSELF AS PRIME MINISTER WAS EMPHASIZING THE NEED FOR NATIONAL RECONCILIATION ; HE SAID THAT HE BELIEVED SOSTHENE SHOULD CONFINE HIMSELF TO MILITARY MATTERS. I REPLIED THAT IF RECRUITMENT IS TO WORK, AND INDEED IF THE REPUBLIC IS TO SURVIVE, THERE MUST BE THE CLOSEST SORT OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE FANK. I SAID THAT I AGREED THAT TALK OF FIGHTING TO FINAL VICTORY WAS OUT OF PLACE; INSTEAD, THE GOVERNMENT AND THE FANK SHOULD BE MAKING THE POINTS THAT THE FUTURE OF THE REPUBLIC IS IN GREAT DANGER AND THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE OTHER SIDE FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT WOULD COME TO NAUGHT UNLESS THIS SIDE IMPROVED ITS MILITARY POSTURE AND ITS POLITICAL COHESION. I ALSO ASSURED IN TAM OF OUR STRONG SONTINUING SUPPORT FOR HIS GOVERNMENT AND OUR READINESS TO DO WHATEVER WE CAN TO PROMOTE BETTER COLLABORATION BETWEEN HIM AND
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THE MILITARY. IN TAM APPEARED TO TAKE COMFORT FROM THIS STATEMENT OF OUR SUPPORT.

6. CONCERNING MARSHAL LON NOL AND HIS HEALTH, THE PRIME MINISTER STATED THAT HE HAD BEEN ADVISED THAT THE MARSHAL HAD CANCELLED ALL HIS APPOINTMENTS FOR THREEKAHSIYH# IN ORDER TO HAVE COMPLETE REST. HE SAID THAT HE HAD NO FURTHER WORD BUT ASSUMED THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN A SUDDEN RISE IN BLOOD PRESSURE NECESSITATING ABSOLUTE REPOSE. HE SHOWED NO ALARM OVER THE SITUATION.

7. COMMENT. IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE GULF BETWEEN KHMER CIVILIANS AND KHMER MILITARY, WHICH HAS STEADILY GROWN

SINCE 1970, HAS EMERGED AS PERHAPS THE MAJOR OBSTACLE
TO THE UNIFIED ACTION WHICH IS NEEDED IF THE GKR IS TO
COPE WITH ITS NUMEROUS INTRACTABLE PROBLEMS. WE WILL
WORK VERY CLOSELY WITH BOTH SIDES IN THE HOPE THAT BETTER
COORDINATION AND SOME SPIRIT OF TOGETHERNESS CAN BE
REALIZED.

SWANK

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED ADDRESSEES.

: # AS RECEIVED. WILL BE SERVICED UPON REQUEST.

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